

**General Assembly
Security Council**Distr.: General
10 June 2015

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5**Security Council**
Seventieth year**Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the
rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory****Identical letters dated 9 June 2015 from the Permanent Observer
of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the
President of the Security Council**

On 5 June 2015, the Palestinian people sombrely marked the forty-eighth year of the Israeli military occupation. As this belligerent foreign occupation of our land and subjugation of our people inconceivably approaches a half-century of duration, we call upon the international community to affirm the illegality of the Israeli occupation, a cruel and devastating occupation that has gravely violated every provision of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 (Fourth Geneva Convention), the international humanitarian law governing situations of foreign occupation. That law stipulates that occupation is a temporary, not indefinite, situation imposed to facilitate the unlawful oppression by the occupying Power and its forced displacement of the occupied civilian population and the colonization and de facto annexation of the occupied land.

After nearly five decades of the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip since 1967, the time is long overdue for the international community, including the Security Council, to unequivocally demand that the occupation be ended forthwith in all its manifestations and to act collectively and responsibly to ensure this outcome. The obligations of the international community in this regard, as well as towards enabling the realization of the long-denied inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including those of self-determination and independence, and the attainment of a just, lasting and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all aspects, are very clearly based on international law, the principles of justice and equity and the relevant United Nations resolutions. In this respect, we underscore the abiding relevance of the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative, and the need for their swift implementation to achieve a comprehensive, durable and just peace.

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These objectives have become more urgent, not less, with the passing of the decades and the accumulation of wrongs perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people and the consequent trampling of human rights and thrashing of the credibility, primacy and efficacy of international law and the international system, including, in particular, the Security Council. While these laws continue to be gravely, systematically and grossly breached by Israel, it has appallingly never been held accountable and has been permitted to act with absolute impunity as a State above the law without consequence, with devastating impact on the Palestinian people and the compounding of this injustice and conflict with each passing day, making the prospects for peace ever more elusive.

The most recent glaring example in this regard is the failure to list Israel as a violator of children's rights in the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, notwithstanding the fact that it so clearly meets the criteria. We fear that this regrettable failure to hold Israel to the same standards to which all other States are held will only further undermine the credibility of the United Nations system and the children and armed conflict mechanism, which is intended to protect children in situations of armed conflict, and further embolden the impunity of Israel, resulting in more suffering, trauma and grief for innocent Palestinian children and their families.

The fact is that Israel, the occupying Power, has not for a minute ceased its illegal policies and measures in Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem. Notwithstanding the repeated appeals and calls by the international community, including in the context of United Nations resolutions, Israel not only continues but also has intensified and broadened the scope and scale of its violations, with grave consequences. Instead of acting in good faith to end this illegal occupation, Israel continues to deliberately cause more suffering for the Palestinian people and to entrench its occupation and destroy the contiguity and viability of the Palestinian land and the prospects for realizing the two-State solution for peace.

This is evidenced in the military aggression in the Gaza Strip over the past year, where the Israeli occupying forces killed, injured and maimed thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children, women and older persons, and caused wanton and massive destruction to homes and vital civilian infrastructure, in addition to the continued imposition of a crippling, dehumanizing and illegal blockade. This is also evidenced in the deteriorating situation in the West Bank, where settlement colonization and land grab activities of Israel have continued non-stop, including the forced displacement of thousands more Palestinians, primarily Bedouin families, in particular, in the areas of Occupied East Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley; the confiscation of huge tracts of land and the destruction of hundreds more Palestinian homes and properties to facilitate the expansion of Israeli settlements and the wall; the continuing detention, arrest, imprisonment and torture of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children; and the unrelenting violence, terror and provocations by extremist Israeli settlers, including towards holy sites, especially the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

We will continue to document these Israeli crimes in our determined pursuit of accountability. Accordingly, I intend to follow up the present letter with a brief review of the grave breaches perpetrated in the recent period by Israel, the occupying Power, as part of this ongoing criminal record. After nearly 50 years of occupation and nearly 70 years since Al-Nakba, we will not relent in our calls and

efforts to uphold international law and protect our people towards the realization of justice, the fulfilment of their inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations, including to independence in a State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace that we have for so long sought and that is so urgently needed for both regional and international peace and security. We call upon the international community, including the Security Council, to respond to the appeals of the Palestinian people and their leadership at this critical moment in time.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 543 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 11 May 2015 (A/ES-10/679-S/2015/327), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed against the Palestinian people. Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Riyad Mansour**
Ambassador

Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

**General Assembly
Security Council**Distr.: General
15 June 2015

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5**Security Council**
Seventieth year**Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and
the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory****Identical letters dated 12 June 2015 from the Permanent Observer
of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the
President of the Security Council**

In follow-up to my letter, dated 9 June 2015, regarding the forty-eighth year of Israel's military occupation, I draw attention to the recent illegal policies and practices that continue to destabilize the situation and inflict grave hardship on the Palestinian people.

In this regard, it should be noted that the illegal practices being highlighted in the present letter reflect only a small sample of Israel's violations throughout the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. The fact is that no one has been spared the occupation's subjugation, oppression and aggression, as Palestine men, women, children, the disabled, the ill and elderly persons have all been victims of the grave and systematic violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, perpetrated every single day by Israel, the occupying Power.

Recently, civilian casualties have continued to be caused by the Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians, including children and peaceful demonstrators. On 10 June, the occupying forces killed a young man in Jenin in a violent military raid on the area. Izz al-Din Bani Gharra, age 23, was shot in the back by Israeli soldiers as he came out of a mosque after prayers. This was preceded by a dawn raid on 8 June, in which undercover units invaded the Beit Jala Hospital in Bethlehem and attempted to abduct two wounded Palestinians, Mo'tasem Nabil Shweiki, age 21, and Mahmoud Emad Shweiki, age 18, who were receiving treatment after being shot by the occupying forces on 7 June in Beit Jala.

The occupying forces also continue to shoot at Palestinian fishermen and farmers in the Gaza Strip, routinely causing injury, destroying the livelihoods of more families, and both violating and threatening the ceasefire agreement concluded under Egyptian auspices on 26 August 2014. In the past month, there were over 27 shootings and two shelling attacks that resulted in the wounding of seven Palestinian fishermen, damage to fishing nets and equipment and the confiscation of



fishing boats. Today, occupying forces shot live fire at peaceful demonstrators in Kafr Qaddum in the West Bank, injuring five people, two of them critically. Palestinian civilians also continue to suffer attacks by extremist Israeli settlers, with children, students and farmers particularly vulnerable to such violence and terror, and in the past few days another two Palestinian men were injured in two hit-and-run incidents involving Israeli settlers.

Military raids also continue to be carried out with the deliberate objective of abducting, arresting and detaining Palestinian civilians. Hundreds of so-called "search and arrest operations" have been carried out by the Israeli occupying forces in recent weeks in cities, towns and villages throughout Occupied Palestine, with particular ferocity in Occupied East Jerusalem. During such raids, the occupying forces routinely ransack homes, terrorize families in the dead of night and forcibly detain, interrogate and assault Palestinians, including children. This includes beatings and threats of harm to individuals and their families, including threats of sexual violence. Recently, dozens more Palestinian civilians have been arrested, detained and imprisoned, including the detention of 11 Palestinians, 5 of whom were children, on 9 June in Beit Hanina.

The physical and psychological maltreatment, including torture, of Palestinian prisoners and detainees being held captive by Israel also continues unabated. In this regard, the plight of administrative detainees, currently 450 Palestinians, among other prisoners, remains critical; hunger strikes continue as a means of drawing attention to the violation of their rights. Khader Adnan — who endured a prolonged hunger strike of 66 days in 2012 and was detained on 8 July 2014 by the occupying forces, which marked the tenth time he has been administratively detained since 1997 — is nearing the fortieth day of a hunger strike, with his health and his life again in danger as he is suffering from extreme weight loss, loss of vision and weakness that has left him wheelchair-bound.

I must also underscore the grave plight of Palestinian children imprisoned by Israel, with children continuing to be violently seized from their homes by occupying forces in the dead of night as well as beaten, blindfolded, strip-searched, interrogated without legal counsel, held incommunicado from their parents, put in solitary confinement and otherwise psychologically traumatized and scarred, with many such acts amounting to torture. In that connection, we draw attention to a campaign sponsored by several non-governmental organizations entitled "No Way to Treat a Child", which addresses the horrors that Palestinian children are subjected to while under Israeli military detention.

Reports indicate that 30 Palestinian children under the age of 15 were arrested by Israel in the month of May alone. According to Defense for Children International, each year approximately 500 to 700 children, some as young as 12 years of age, are arrested, detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military detention system. It is also estimated that at least 95,000 Palestinian children have been arrested by Israel since the occupation began in 1967. This appalling fact, along with the countless other Israeli crimes against Palestinian children, must be taken into serious consideration in the context of the upcoming Security Council deliberations on the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, with a view to considering the means to ending such egregious violations against children, ensuring the protection of children in all circumstances and holding the perpetrators accountable.

In the Gaza Strip, tensions remain high and have risen recently, with several Israeli military operations near and beyond the border areas, including in Khuza'a and Khan Younis. The humanitarian situation of Palestinian families there remains grave as the Israeli blockade continues and the deplorable impact of the Israeli military aggression of the past summer continues to mar every aspect of their lives. Recovery and rehabilitation continue to be obstructed, not only at the physical level of building reconstruction, but also at the human level as the Palestinian civilian population continues to be deprived of basic necessities, including medical, water, fuel and construction supplies, deprived of livelihoods, isolated from the entire world and deprived of any normalcy of life.

Here, I must highlight the recent findings by the World Bank that unemployment in Gaza is the highest in the world, at 43 per cent, with youth unemployment having reached a staggering rate of 60 per cent as at the end of 2014. These shocking figures were presented in the report of the World Bank to the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians in Brussels on 27 May 2015. In this regard, the World Bank Country Director for West Bank and Gaza, Steen Lau Jorgensen, stated that "The ongoing blockade and the 2014 war have taken a toll on Gaza's economy and people's livelihoods. Gaza's exports virtually disappeared and the manufacturing sector has shrunk by as much as 60 per cent. The economy cannot survive without being connected to the outside world." The lack of opportunity and hopelessness suffered by the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza, particularly our young people, must be cause for alarm and should impel renewed international commitment and action to bring an end to the inhumane Israeli blockade and to accelerate the reconstruction of Gaza and ensure sustainable solutions to the underlying problems and the provision of hope and possibility, where for too long there has been none.

Of course, the recent period has also witnessed the continuation of Israel's settlement colonization throughout Occupied Palestine, especially in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, gravely harming the contiguity and integrity of our land and destroying the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. In grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, notably articles 49 and 33, Israel persists with construction of settlements and the wall, confiscation of Palestinian land, demolition of homes and properties, and forced displacement of Palestinian civilians, with Bedouin communities most threatened in this regard.

In the southern hills of Al-Khalil, the homes and existence of the Palestinian residents of Sussiya village continue to be endangered by the occupying Power's colonization schemes. The civilian population there is facing imminent forced displacement as measures continue to be taken to facilitate the expansion of the nearby illegal settlement of "Susya". At least 4,000 Palestinians in that area, the majority of whom are herders or farmers, face such a fate if the occupying Power is not stopped. On 3 June, occupying forces also demolished over 30 residential structures and livestock barns in the northern Jordan Valley and ordered Palestinian residents of Um Salmouna, a village south of Bethlehem, to stop construction of their houses. On 11 June, Israeli bulldozers levelled four acres of land belonging to Palestinian farmer Sabri Rashad Manasra from Wadi Fukin. Israel also recently decided to seize 202 acres of privately-owned land belonging to 140 Palestinian families from the villages of Deir Dibwan and Rammoun north of Ramallah to making new "dumping grounds" for its illegal settlements.

These incidents are only a few of the countless violations and crimes being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people on any given day. The nearly half-century of belligerent military occupation is driven and sustained only by such illegal policies and practices. The international community, including the Security Council, must confront this unlawful situation and cannot continue to turn a blind eye to this injustice. Collective international action is required now to bring Israel into compliance with its legal obligations under international law and United Nations resolutions without exception, to protect the Palestinian people, including our children, until this occupation is brought to an end and to salvage the prospects for the two-State solution for peace before it is too late.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 544 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 9 June 2015 (A/ES-10/680-S/2015/417) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed against the Palestinian people by Israel, the occupying Power, for which it must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

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(Signed) **Riyad Mansour**
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